GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6378
ANSWERED ON:07.05.2003
UNSAFE FOOD
CHADA SURESH REDDY;VUKKALA RAJESWARAMMA

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether facilities to test the vulnerability of harmful blends of edible items imported into the country are insufficient; and

(b) if so, the action proposed to be taken to curb imports of biologically unsafe food?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA)

(a): Imported food items are required to meet the standards prescribed in the rules made under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 for all the products listed therein.

The Department of Biotechnology is currently engaged in developing protocols using PCR and ELISA methods for identification of transgenic traits such as nucleic acids and proteins, respectively in Genetically Modified Foods and products derived therefrom through research and development endeavors at five institutions in the country. These are National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad, Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysore, Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics Hyderabad, National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, New Delhi and Industrial Toxicological Research Centre, Lucknow.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is also strengthening National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad for the establishment of a national facility for evaluation of safety of genetically modified foods. The proposal has been included in the capacity Building Project for strengthening of Food labs. in the Country.

(b): The rules for the Manufacture, Use, Import and Storage of hazardous Microorganism/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cell, 1989 notified under the Environmental Protection Act, 1986, restricts, a person from importing, manufacture, transport, storage, distribution or sale of any food, feed, raw or processed or any ingredient of food, food additives or any food product that contains GM material, without the approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC).